

March 16, 2022

MEMORANDUM

To: City Council

From: Nick Sugar, City Planner

CC: Thom Sheridan, Assistant City Manager; Greg Hannan, Community Development Director; Emily Fernandez, Management Analyst

Subj: Comprehensive Plan Framework

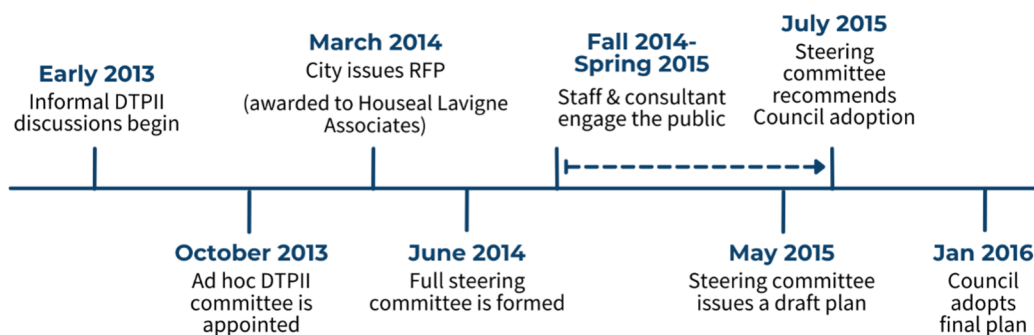
Comprehensive Plan Overview

The City's Comprehensive Plan is a long-term vision and policy document, directed by the community, guiding important issues in land use, infrastructure, transportation, parks and recreation, and community services and facilities.

On a high level, the Comprehensive Plan is used as an overall priority document for the city, identifying long-term goals and the tools necessary for achieving them. On a micro level, it is used to guide ongoing land use decisions such as zoning map amendments, conditional use, site plans, and subdivision reviews. Text within the Land Development Code directly references the Comprehensive Plan, helping to guide staff, the Boards and Commissions, and City Council in their reviews.

Section 9.03 of the Hudson City Charter states *Council shall initiate the review of the Comprehensive Plan of the Municipality for any needed changes or modifications no less than every ten (10) years*. It is important to start the process early, as it is typically a multi-year effort, the bulk of which is spent on community engagement. For example, the last update took nearly three years to complete. The following timeline and description summarize the previous effort.

History of the 2015 Plan



The 2015 Comprehensive Plan began in early 2013 with informal discussions on Downtown Phase II. Council appointed an ad hoc committee to study Downtown Phase II in October 2013 and the City issued an RFP the following March, which was awarded to Houseal Lavigne Associates. The overall steering committee was formed in June 2014. Staff and the consultant conducted the public engagement process from Fall 2014 to Spring 2015. A draft plan was issued in May 2015 and, following two months of public review, the steering committee recommended Council adoption in July 2015. The plan was reviewed by the Planning Commission and then adopted by City Council in January 2016.

Discussions to Date

City Council and staff have held discussions about the plan update at two Council Workshops:

- **March 9, 2021:** Staff introduced the topic of commencing work on the Comprehensive Plan update. Staff and Council discussed community participation and steering committee composition on a high level. Overall, Council advised it would be best to wait until after the upcoming election to begin work on the effort, though work could commence on researching existing conditions.
- **January 25, 2022:** Staff presented the Hudson Snapshot report, which summarized Hudson's existing conditions in key areas including demographics, housing, utilities, transportation, and land use. Council provided feedback to improve the report. Staff provided a brief history of the 2015 plan, such as the general timeline and scope of work. Council advised that the current Comprehensive Plan process should commence in March, with staff attending a workshop to provide an outline of the timeline and key considerations in developing the plan.

Proposed Framework

Staff has prepared the following framework after review of the 2015 plan and research about peer efforts:





Establish Committee

Establishment of a steering committee to guide and advise the planning team through the process is a key resource that was successful with the 2015 plan. Steering committees typically meet on a monthly basis to review project deliverables, provide input on key topics of the plan, ensure the process is being carried out in a timely manner, and assist in public outreach. The committee could be comprised of approximately 25-30 members, representing a broad spectrum of interests including:

- **Ward/Neighborhood Representatives:** Council appointed Ward and at-large representatives
- **Business:** Small businesses, large employers, Hudson Merchants Association, realtors
- **Philanthropic:** Hudson Community Foundation, Peg's Foundation, Morgan Foundation, Hudson Heritage Association
- **Educational:** WRA, Hudson City Schools, Hudson Library
- **City Boards:** Planning Commission, Park Board, Economic Growth Board, BZBA, AHBR, Tree Commission, Environmental Awareness Committee



Select Consultant

Staff reviewed the past 2015 Comprehensive Plan effort and conducted research regarding the roles that consultants perform in municipal comprehensive planning. The research focused on peer efforts that included significant public engagement or had been recognized by the American Planning Association.

Hudson's contract for the 2015 Plan totaled \$106,380. Of our peer efforts research, all communities relied on consultant work, with costs ranging from \$85,000 - \$288,000 and varying largely in scope of work. The cost differences were largely driven by volume of engagement events and level of technical analysis required.

Per this research, staff is requesting support of a consultant, though at a reduced scope as compared to the 2015 Plan. Staff has the resources to perform in-house work, allowing reduction of overall costs and a more community focused effort. Staff will take an active role in the upcoming process, including research, technical writing, and community outreach, to ensure the voice of the community is included at every step. In considering that the consultant's role will be reduced but also recognizing that consultant costs have risen since the last bid was awarded eight years ago, staff anticipate a consultant cost of approximately \$85,000-\$100,000.

With the community providing vision, staff providing expertise, and the steering committee providing direction, the consultant's work would primarily focus on general advising for

benchmarking or best practices, assisting in community engagement, and draft writing of the document. The result will be a document that captures the community’s goals and provides clear guidance for Hudson’s future in a visually appealing format.

The following chart summarizes anticipated staff vs. consultant tasks.

Distribution of Plan Activities	
Staff Lead	Consultant Lead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting and engagement logistics • Let’s Talk Hudson (online engagement) • Small group mtgs mgmt. • Communications • Write, distribute, & analyze surveys • Census data research • Other existing conditions data collection • Secondary writing and revisions • Videography and photography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing visioning/initial engagement • Create engagement materials • Advise on best practices • Technical assistance on surveys • Primary maps & graphics • Primary writing • Organization of final doc



Engage the Community

A core staff team will lead the engagement effort in close coordination with the consultant. The effort will include a visioning process to identify residents’ core values, vision, and goals for Hudson’s future. Residents, the business community, and other community partners will be encouraged to participate in the following ways:

- A kickoff event
- Community presentations/ open house
- Focus group/key person interviews
- Neighborhood ward meetings
- Community events, festivals, markets
- Online interaction through the Let’s Talk Hudson website - [Website Link](#)
- *Additional engagements to be determined with consultant*

Staff and the consultant will compile community feedback into a summary report, to be shared with the community, similar to the *2020 Connectivity Plan Resident Feedback Report*.



Draft the Plan

Staff will work to develop the plan, finalizing topics of study based on the engagement findings. The steering committee will guide and review the initial draft. Example topics of the plan could include:

- Land Use
- Connectivity
- Public Infrastructure
- Community Facilities
- Sustainability
- Safety
- Quality of Life (preservation, design, arts, culture)
- Innovation and Technology

The Draft Plan would be presented to city boards and the public via an open house and the Let's Talk Hudson webpage for additional feedback.



Finalize the Plan

Staff and the consultant will seek final comments from the community and revise the draft accordingly. The steering committee will submit a final draft to City Council for review and adoption. Once adopted, the plan will be shared online for public viewing. Staff will provide an annual update to Council on progress toward the strategies outlined in the plan.

Summary:

Once Council direction is received on the below discussion items, city staff would transition to commence work on the formal effort. Staff is requesting Council feedback on the following key discussion points:

1. **Committee Selection**– size, organization, and composition
2. **Community Engagement** – scope and event types
3. **Consultant Scope** - timing (pre or post committee selection), key roles, and cost